

Message Text

SECRET

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45

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 SNM-02 AID-20 IGA-02

AGR-20 SCI-06 JUSE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 DRC-01 /195 W

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R 141205Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 645

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION GENEVA

S E C R E T BANGKOK 2556

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:SNAR

SUBJECT: RTG REACTION TO U.S. DECISION TO GROW OPIUM POPPIES

REF: A) STATE 26073

B) BANGKOK 2204

C) STATE 029845

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE

1. AN EMBASSY OFFICE BRIEFED CHIT POSAYANOND, CHAIRMAN OF
THE RTG DELEGATION TO THE GENEVA MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON
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NARCOTIC DRUGS, AND COLONEL CHAVALIT YODMANEE, DEPUTY SECRETARY

GENERAL OF THE RTG NARCOTICS BOARD, FEBRUARY 14 ACCORDING TO INSTRUCTIONS (REFTELS). BOTH CHIT AND CHAVALIT FORCEFULLY STATED THAT,9 NO MATTER WHAT THE RATIONALE THE US PRESENTS FOR THE PLANING OF OPIUM FOR EXPERIMENTAL PURPOSES, THIS ACTION WILL APPEAR "ABSURD"TO CONCERNED NATIONS. CHAVALIT STATED, WITH CHIT NODDING VIGOROUS ASSENT, THAT FOR THE US TO PLANT OPIUM, EVEN UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES AS EXPLAINED, AFTER SO GREAT A WORLD-EFFORT AGAINST OPIUM,WOULD APPEAR "HYPOCRITICAL" A WORD CHAVALIT USED REPEATEDLY.

2. BOTH MEN REJECTED, ALMOST DERSIVELY, THE ARGUMENT THAT THE US WAS EMBARDKING SOLELY ON A PROGRAM OF EXPERIMENTATION: "AND IF YOUR EXPERIMENTS SUCCEED", CHIT ASKED SCORNFULLY, "WHAT WILL YOU DO THEN? NOT PLANT OPIUM?".

3. CHIT USED THE OCCASION TO RAISE AGAIN HIS LONG-HELD VIEW THAT THAILAND SHOULD HAVE SOME AREAS DEVOTED TO THE LICIT PRODUCTION OF OPIUM. HE ARGUED THAT THE RTG COULD CONTROL EFFECTIVELY THE 10,000 RAI AREA IN THE VICINITY OF SOI SAM MUN, CHIANG MAI PROVINCE, GROW OPIUM THERE AND UTILIZE THE OPIUM STRAW TECHNIQUE FOR EXTRACTION. THE EMBASSY OFFICER MADE CLEAR THE FIRM OPPOSITION OF THE U.S. TO ANY MOVES TOWARD PERMITTING LICIT PRODUCTION IN COUNTRIES WHERE UNCONTROLLED PRODUCTION REMAINS A PROBLEM.

COMMENT: THE ATTITUDE AND COMMENTS OF CHIT AND CHAVALIT, TWO KEY THAI IN THE RTG ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM, GIVE AMPLE EVIDENCE OF THE HEAVY SAILING WHICH WE SHALL HAVE IN THE FUTURE IN PERSUADING THE THAI TO MAINTAIN A MAXIMUM EFFORT IN BOTH INTERDICTION AND CROP SUBSTITUTION. IT IS NOT SO MUCH THAT THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE US PROBLEM OF A SHORTAGE OF OPIATES BUT THAT THEY FEEL THAT SOME OTHER MEANS TO APPROACH IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN FOUND.THIS MATTER IS ALSO LIKELY TO COMPLICATE OUR OVERALL RELATIONS WITH THE RTG AT A CRUCIAL TIME. IN VIEW OF THE STRONG ADVERSE REACTION HERE AND ELSEWHERE, WOULD IT NOT BE PROCEDURALLY POSSIBLE, AS WELL AS HIGHLY DESIRABLE, TO REFER THE MATTER TO A MULTINATIONAL EXPERT COMMITTEE AS SUGGESTED BANGKOK 2204?
KINTNER

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